

Notes on the Discovery of the Larva and Pupa in Britain of *Gortyna borelii* Pierret : Fisher's Estuarine Moth

By J. M. CHALMERS-HUNT

Mr J. B. Fisher was the first to find this species in Britain, when he took a single specimen in an m.v.l. trap in September 1968, and in 1970 had the good fortune to take two more examples at light. It was not until 1971, however, that a record of these captures was published (Fisher, 1971; Jacobs, 1971).

Kirby (1903) gives *Peucedanum officinale* L.: Sea Hog's Fennel as the foodplant of *borelii* on the continent. This is an erect perennial umbelliferous plant with a very stout and woody root. It occurs as a native in Britain, but is restricted to a few localities only.

Mr Fisher kindly showed me a station where *P. officinale* is locally numerous, and in early August 1971 I visited the locality twice, and from the start soon found signs of larval feeding.

The larva feeds in the base of the stem and solid root, sometimes boring down into the latter to a depth of nearly a foot. It ejects piles of coarse pale-straw frass, which forms in a heap on the surface of the soil around the foot of the plant. Affected plants showed distinct signs of wilt, and some appeared moribund or actually dead from having been killed by the ravages of the larva. Judging from the numbers of affected plants seen, *borelii* appeared to be quite plentiful at this locality.

A single pupa was found situated head upwards in the rhizome. It had no cocoon, nor was there any apparent sign of silk covering.

In order to avoid the risk of any appreciable reduction in the strength of the colony, I decided to collect only five larvae and the one pupa already mentioned, and owing to the relative scarcity of *P. officinale* in Britain, to select only from dead or dying plants.

The roots containing the larvae I placed in cylindrical cages and partly covered them with soil. I later offered one larva a root of garden carrot. It fed well on this and indeed seemed to relish it.

In September six moths emerged. The first appeared on the 7th and the rest as follows:—17th 18th 25th (2), and 27th. Apart from one which was crippled, their wing expanse ranged from 48-57 mm.

I am indebted to Mr G. M. Haggett for the following abridged description of one of my larvae when in its final instar on August 5th:—

Length 50 mm. Body cylindrical, smooth, dully shining skin, ground colour waxy cream, heavily suffused smoky purplish along the dorsum, with heavily chitinised black lateral warts and weaker black dorsal warts. Spiracles black. Head ginger-red, prothoracic plate ginger-brown marked with black at each

side, anal plate black and heavily chitinised, a belt of black chitin on the preceding ring. True legs black, prolegs cream with a weak dark bar above.

References

- Fisher, J. B. 1971. *Gortyna borelii* Pierret (ssp. *lunata* Freyer?): a new British moth. *Ent. Rec.*, **83**: 51-52.
- Jacobs, S. N. A. 1971. Exhibit of coloured print of photograph by J. B. Fisher of *Gortyna borelii* Pierret. *Proc. Brit. Ent. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, **1971**: 31.
- Kirby, W. F. 1903. *The Butterflies and Moths of Europe*.

Notes and Observations

INFURCITINEA ARGENTIMACULELLA STAINTON (Lep. Tineidae) IN SURREY.—On the 23rd of August 1971, I was in the vicinity of Albury, near St. Martha's Hill, Guildford, when along the edge of a road I noticed cavities and overhangs of sandstone about which were growths of lichen. These aroused my attention, and, having become well acquainted over the years with the particular habitat of *I. argentimaculella*, I decided that they were worth my inspection. After a while, and in several places, I found almost certain evidence that the moth is established in the area. The imago itself was not present, it being a July insect, but the thin silken tubes were pretty clear on the surface of the lichen. I know of nothing else that produces these tubes.

I. argentimaculella has been recorded from Surrey in the past, and probably exists in other suitable localities in the area. I hope to confirm its presence by finding the moth this year. This species is probably much more widespread in the country, but is overlooked because of its secluded habits.—E. S. BRADFORD, 38 Oakwood Avenue, Boreham Wood, Herts. 30.xii.1971.

NEPTICULA MYRTILLELLA STAINTON (LEP. NEPTICULIDAE).—Lieut. Col. Emmet in his notes on the Nepticulidae (*Ent. Rec.*, **83**: 302 and 303) omitted to give Cornwall as a locality for this species. I have found vacated mines at Hensbarrow Downs, near St Austell at odd times between August and October both in 1969 and in 1970. The mines are nearly always in a lower leaf of a stalk of *Vaccinium* (bilberry), and they are usually characterised by the purplish colouring of the leaf which he describes. I suggest that this may be a new county record.

From several tenanted mines which I gathered in the autumn of 1970, I succeeded in rearing only one moth, which emerged in May 1971.—J. L. GREGORY, 17 Grove Road St Austell, Cornwall. 3.xii.1971.